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INSANITY IN TWINS.

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A. M. and I. M., twin brothers, aged thirty-two years, natives of Prussia, not married, were admitted to the Illinois Central Hospital for the Insane, September 5, 188—. The cause of the insanity, in each case, according to the verdict of the jury, was "self-abuse and loss of money." Heredity was the real underlying cause, as their mother was insane. Masturbation seemed to us to have no etiologic importance in either case. The cases presented symptoms almost identical. A. M. had been insane two weeks before admission to the hospital, his attack beginning suddenly with maniacal excitement; he became very noisy and violent at times. The delusions, manifested then and since, were of a religious character, more or less systematized. He believed his brother was the Messiah, and had descended from heaven; that the Messiah (his brother) had ordered that he be worshipped in sackcloth and ashes, and that, as a religious rite, A. M. should drink salt-water. When admitted to the hospital he was agitated, sleepless, emaciated, and would not take nourishment readily. After the agitation had subsided, he ceased to be violent, but the delusions were as persistent as ever, and became more systematized. He talked less, and after a time he settled into a state of indifference and carelessness, which, after two years, is practically unchanged. He has twice



escaped from the hospital, both times going to his home, where he caused consternation by his insane actions. At present he is in good physical health, his mental symptoms being those of degenerative paranoia.

I. M. did not become disturbed until a week after his brother's insanity had developed, when suddenly he, too, became noisy and went about proclaiming that he *was* the Messiah, and the day of judgment was at hand. His agitation rapidly developed into violent maniacal excitement, necessitating restraint. When admitted to the hospital he was considerably exhausted, from prolonged excitement, loss of sleep, etc. After a few days he became again very much agitated, and continued so, at intervals, for a period of three months. His agitation was more violent than that of his brother, but was similar in character. He ultimately became calm—in fact, for a time, was depressed, but later a more regular mental state was established; he became brighter than his brother, but never displayed much sane intelligence. His delusions became systematized and marked his case as one of degenerative paranoia. His physical health improved and he was finally removed, by the county authorities, from the hospital to the County Institution, from which he soon after eloped and then emigrated to a neighboring State.

The brothers resembled each other closely: I. M. was heavier and stronger than A. M., but their mental caliber, habits, and customs, as well as occupations, were similar. I. M. was a tinker, A. M. a peddler; they travelled together, lived a hermit like existence together, and were very devoted to each other. They were Jews, and in their religious observances were always together. These cases support what Ball¹ has said regarding insanity in twins, viz., "that they show the closest physical and

¹ B. Ball: *Insanity in Twins*. Tuke's Dictionary of Psychological Medicine.

moral resemblance; features, intellectual and moral disposition coincide." Their mental aberration is developed simultaneously and the attacks are similar in character. In these cases both are pronounced paranoiacs. Further, the dominating influence of heredity is shown in these cases in the highest manifestations of its force. For these twins are brothers with a closer tie than that of other children in the same family, "because they were born at the same time, conceived under identical circumstances, they experienced the same influences during the whole period of gestation, and as in some, if not in all, cases there has resulted a striking resemblance of cerebral organization and of physical health." Such can be the only possible origin of these pathologic symptoms which, breaking out at the same moment, follow an absolutely identical course, characterized by the same phases and same observations.

